

The Buddha says in one of the **Sutras**:

*Children are not aware of compositional suffering
Which is like not being aware of a hair in one's hand
Aryas have generated the mind [that is aware of compositional suffering]
Which for them is like being aware of a hair in one's eye.*

5) The sixteen aspects of the four noble truths

Each noble truth possesses four aspects or attributes, making sixteen altogether. The contemplation of those sixteen aspects helps us to get a better understanding of the four noble truths. At the same time, the sixteen aspects counteract erroneous views held by various non-Buddhist philosophical systems.

The four aspects of the truth of suffering

1. *Impermanent*: The contaminated five aggregates are impermanent because they are produced occasionally (i.e. they are produced and disintegrate which means that they are not static but change moment by moment).
This counteracts the misperception that the five contaminated aggregates are permanent.
2. *Suffering*: The contaminated five aggregates are in the nature of suffering because they are under the control of contaminated karma and delusions.
This counteracts the misperception that the five aggregates are in the nature of pleasure and happiness.
3. *Empty*: The contaminated five aggregates are empty because they are empty of a permanent, partless, independent self.
This counteracts the misperception of a permanent, partless, independent self.
4. *Selfless*: The contaminated five aggregates are selfless because they do not exist as or are not controlled by a self-sufficient, substantially existent self.
This counteracts the misperception of a self-sufficient, substantially existent self.

The four aspects of the truth of origin

1. *Cause*: Contaminated karma and attachment are causes because they are the roots of suffering
This counteracts the misperception that suffering is causeless.
2. *Origin*: Contaminated karma and attachment are origins because they produce suffering again and again.
This counteracts the misperception that suffering is caused by only one cause.
3. *Strong Production*: Contaminated karma and attachment are strong producers because they produce suffering with great force.
This counteracts the misperception that the nature of things is permanent but that their states are changeable.
4. *Condition*: Contaminated karma and attachment are conditions because they act as the cooperative conditions of suffering.
This meditation counteracts the misperception that suffering is created under the supervision of a deity.

The four aspects of the truth of cessation

1. *Cessation*: A separation which is a total elimination of contaminated karma and delusions is a cessation because of being a state of having abandoned suffering.
This counteracts the misperception that there is no liberation from cyclic existence.
2. *Pacification*: A separation which is a total elimination of contaminated karma and delusions is a pacification because of being a state of having pacified delusions.
This counteracts the misperception that certain contaminated states are liberation (e.g. the Jaina's assertion that there is a place a liberation on top of the worlds that is like an upside-down umbrella).

3. *Auspicious Highness*: A separation which is a total elimination of contaminated karma and delusions is auspiciously high because it is a separation which is in the nature of benefit and bliss. This counteracts the misperception that there is a liberation that is superior to the cessation of suffering.
4. *Definite Emergence*: A separation which is a total elimination of contaminated karma and delusions is a definite emergence because it is a separation from suffering such that it will never return. This counteracts the misperception that liberation, once attained, is reversible.

The four aspects of the truth of the path

1. *Path*: A Bodhisattva path of seeing that directly realizes selflessness is a path because it causes one to proceed to liberation. This counteracts the misperception that there are no paths of liberation from cyclic existence.
2. *Suitability*: A Bodhisattva path of seeing that directly realizes selflessness is suitable because it is a path which serves as an antidote to delusions. This counteracts the misperception that the mind directly realizing selflessness is not a path of liberation.
3. *Achiever*: A Bodhisattva path of seeing that directly realizes selflessness is an achiever because it directly and unmistakably realizes the nature of the path. This counteracts the misperception that paths such as worldly concentration, undergoing asceticism of the five fires, etc. are paths of liberation.
4. *Deliverance*: A Bodhisattva path of seeing that directly realizes selflessness is a deliverer because it is a path which eliminates suffering and delusions irreversibly. This counteracts the misperception that there is no total eliminator of suffering.

Regarding the relation between each of the four noble truths:

Whatever is a truth of suffering is not necessarily a truth of origin. However, whatever is a truth of origin is necessarily a truth of suffering. The truth of suffering, the truth of cessation, and the truth of the path are all three contradictory.

Regarding the relation of the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths:

The four aspects of the four noble truths are contradictory. The four aspects of the truth of origin, the four aspects of the truth of cessation, and the four aspects of the truth of the path are each equivalent.

This completes the presentation of the four noble truths according to the **General Meaning**.

The presentation of the four noble truths according to the *Decisive Analysis*:

- Someone says: "(1) The definition of the truth of cessation is '*that which is an uncontaminated effect*' and (2) the definition of the truth of the path is '*that which is an uncontaminated cause*'."
 - (1) The first definition is not correct because whatever accords with that definition is not necessarily a truth of cessation. For instance, an omniscient mind is that which is an uncontaminated effect but it is not a truth of cessation.
 - (2) The second definition is also not correct because whatever accords with the second definition is not necessarily a truth of the path. For instance, the Buddha is an uncontaminated cause but it is not a truth of a path.
- Someone says: "(1) The definition of the truth of suffering is '*that which is contaminated and the fruitional result of its cause, a truth of origin*', (2) the definition of the truth of origin is '*that which contaminated and the fruitional cause of its effect, a truth of suffering*', (3) the definition of the truth of cessation is '*an analytical cessation that is the nominal effect of a truth of the path*' and (4) the definition of the truth of the path is '*a purified truth that is the nominal cause of a truth of cessation*'."

